



Reply to
Attention of:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NORTHWESTERN DIVISION, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 2870
PORTLAND, OREGON 97208-2870

JAN 29 2001

Water Management Division

Ms. Colleen Cawston, Chairperson
Colville Business Council
P.O. Box 150
Nespelem, Washington 99155-0150

Dear Ms. Cawston:

As you are aware, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), along with the Bonneville Power Administration and Bureau of Reclamation, have consulted with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) and listed species in the Pacific Northwest. At the same time, we have also been working with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to address water quality issues in the mainstem Columbia and Snake rivers. On behalf of EPA, NMFS, and the Corps, I am writing this letter to address actions with water quality implications that we intend to pursue in response to the issuance of the Biological Opinions and request that our respective agencies meet to discuss those actions.

A strategy for addressing water quality is explained in an appendix to the NMFS Biological Opinion. It involves development of a water quality plan for the mainstem Columbia and Snake rivers to address Clean Water Act (CWA) objectives. We believe that many aspects of such a plan are complementary to the efforts that the states, Tribes, and EPA have initiated to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads for total dissolved gas and temperature for the mainstem Columbia and Snake rivers.

Another element of this strategy is to assure survival and recovery of the listed stocks. In the near term, this relies on voluntary spill at mainstem Columbia and Snake rivers projects to provide better passage conditions for juvenile fish.

We believe that the best approach to accomplish the goals for survival and recovery of the listed stocks and to accomplish water quality goals of the CWA is to develop a regional, multi-year agreement. This agreement would clearly define the steps and timetable to develop a long-term basin-wide water quality plan. It would also address how we accomplish NMFS and USFWS biological measures of spilling to 120 percent total dissolved gas levels supported by the current monitoring and reporting program and would replace the annual process currently underway.

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We would like to schedule meetings with state representatives, with participation of Tribal representatives, to discuss a long-term compliance strategy. We would also like to have a separate Tribal coordination meeting to share information on this proposed strategy.

We would like to meet with you in the near future to discuss this strategy. We believe working together to develop a regional agreement is the most effective approach to reaching the region's goals to meet CWA objectives and benefiting our salmon resources.

If you have any additional questions concerning the meeting or the proposed agreement, please contact Dave Ponganis at (503) 808-3828 or Dick Cassidy at (503) 808-3938.

Sincerely,



Eric T. Mogren
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Deputy Division Engineer

Copies Furnished:

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